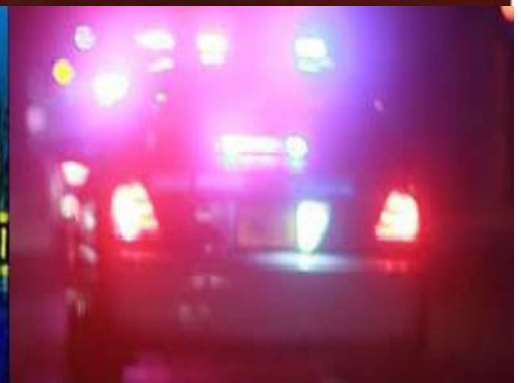




State of Illinois
Illinois State Police
Brendan F. Kelly, Director

Illinois Missing Children Report 2024



www.amberillinois.org

2024 Annual Report

I. INTRODUCTION

The Illinois State Enforcement Agencies to Recover Children (I SEARCH) program was created by the passage of the Intergovernmental Missing Child Recovery Act of 1984 (325 ILCS 40/1, et seq.). The program was designed to educate the public, improve the criminal justice system, affect legislative change, and direct assistance for local programs designed to improve child safety. This report is submitted for Calendar Year 2024, in compliance with the final paragraph of the Act, entitled, “Annual Report.”

On January 1, 2013, Illinois changed from the I SEARCH program to the Illinois Missing Persons Clearinghouse. This move was necessary to bring Illinois in line with all other states’ clearinghouse structure for missing persons. Currently, all 50 states have a missing persons clearinghouse. The Missing Persons Clearinghouse is managed by the Department of State Police and administers the Illinois AMBER Alert Notification System, the Illinois Endangered Missing Person Advisory System, and the Silver Search Program.

The Illinois State Police Law Enforcement Agencies Data System (LEADS) is the information system linking Illinois police agencies, other state agencies, and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). The Intergovernmental Missing Child Recovery Act of 1984 and the National Child Search Assistance Act of 1990 mandate immediate entry of all reports of missing children into LEADS, which are automatically entered into the nationwide NCIC database.

II. ILLINOIS STATE CLEARINGHOUSE FOR MISSING PERSONS

An effective resource in solving cases of missing and exploited children, the Clearinghouse is a focal point for the coordination of efforts by law enforcement, social services, education, and prevention programs, as well as legislative advocacy and the dissemination of missing children’s information. Its responsibilities include:

- Collaborating with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) on missing child cases and public and private reports of exploited children;
- Coordinating with and providing assistance to state and local public and private nonprofit agencies, including those of other states and the federal government, in the location and recovery of missing persons and the identification of unidentified persons and bodies;
- Establishing and operating a statewide, toll-free telephone line for reports of missing persons and reports of sightings of missing persons;
- Providing a uniform missing person reporting and investigation protocol for law enforcement agencies within the state;
- Posting a list of long-term missing person cases, including identifying information for

- dissemination to state and local public and private nonprofit agencies and the public;
- Compiling statistics on the missing children cases in the state and trends that affect the handling and resolution of these cases each year;
 - Assisting in the training of law enforcement and other professionals about missing and unidentified persons and bodies;
 - Operating a clearinghouse of information about methods of locating and recovering missing persons;
 - Operating a resource center of information about the prevention of abduction and sexual exploitation of children; and
 - Developing and implementing a coordinated program for a statewide emergency alert system to be used when a child is abducted;
 - Work closely with the Department of Vital Records to prevent abductors from obtaining birth or other legal records;
 - Collaborate with the Illinois State Board of Education to ensure schools are notifying resource officers if a child is listed as missing;
 - Provide public safety training sessions related to internet safety for parents and children;
 - Network with missing person coordinators in our neighboring state and across the country to share information about missing person cases and create a borderless response;
 - Serve as the Illinois point of contact with the U.S. Department of State for all missing child cases that fall under the international HAGUE treaty, and coordinate with local law enforcement to locate those children;
 - Work with the AMBER Alert Technical Assistance Program of the U.S. Department of Justice to advocate for enhanced resources and technology to assist in the dissemination of statewide and regional alerts when a child goes missing;
 - Utilize public and private partnerships to raise awareness for missing children with the intention of helping in their safe return.

III. FISCAL

There is no fiscal liability to the state of Illinois. All activities are performed under the structure of the Illinois State Police.

IV. SPECIAL ACTIVITY

Public Act 93-0310 established the Illinois AMBER Plan Task Force to monitor and review the implementation and operation of the AMBER Alert notification system and the endangered missing person advisory process. The Task Force continues to discuss ways of updating and enhancing the current AMBER Alert system. The Task Force maintains the AMBER Alert website, www.amberillinois.org, while also providing information to law enforcement, educators, media, parents, and the public regarding the Illinois AMBER Alert Plan.

In 2024, the Illinois AMBER Alert Task Force continued to utilize its partnerships with the Illinois Lottery, the Illinois Department of Transportation, and the Illinois Tollway Authority. These partners voluntarily provide access to their broad network of publicly viewed technologies to allow AMBER Alert broadcasts to be prominently displayed.

The Illinois Lottery projects the information about the missing child, suspect, or vehicle on their more than 2,200 digital displays at lottery retailers across Illinois. This system allows millions of retail customers the ability to view the AMBER Alert message.

The partnerships do not stop at lottery terminals. The AMBER Alert Notification System continues to utilize digital message boards over Illinois interstates and tollways. This partnership with the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Illinois Tollway Authority has led to increased awareness for drivers of Illinois roadways.



On January 13, 2024, Illinois observed AMBER Alert Awareness Day. A poster contest titled “Bring Our Missing Children Home” was launched by the Illinois AMBER Alert Task Force. School superintendents, principals, teachers, community leaders, law enforcement, and parents joined in the effort to educate children about safety issues.

For the 7th straight year, the Illinois Clearinghouse continues to chair the Interstate Advisory Council for Missing and Exploited Children (I-SEARCH). This council is made up of various law enforcement and child safety agencies throughout 13 Midwest states. I-SEARCH states have been meeting biannually since 1982 in an effort to enhance missing person communications and investigations that cross state lines. Clearinghouse managers and AMBER Alert coordinators from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin make up the I-SEARCH Council.

The Interstate Advisory Council for Missing and Exploited Children (I-SEARCH) held a spring meeting on February 29, 2024. This meeting was held in conjunction with the National AMBER Alert symposium in New Orleans, Louisiana. The meeting provided updates

from the Department of Justice, as well as future training initiatives and collaborations between states. The meeting was hosted by Fox Valley Technical College.

On October 7-10, 2024, the Interstate Advisory Council for Missing and Exploited Children (I-SEARCH) held a fall meeting in Indianapolis, IN. The Indiana State Police hosted the group at its headquarters. The following agencies were represented: Illinois State Police, Michigan State Police, Indiana State Police, North Dakota Highway Patrol, Minnesota Division of Criminal Intelligence, Wisconsin Attorney General's Office, Missouri Highway Patrol, and Kentucky State Police. The group collaborated on ways to better respond to missing and exploited children that cross state lines, as well as providing insight and perspective on technologies that help locate missing children more efficiently.

In May 2024, Illinois marked the nine-year anniversary of its partnership with Alert GPS. This technology provides a more efficient and effective warning system to law enforcement, media, and the public. The Law Enforcement Alerting Portal (L.E.A.P) delivers major efficiencies to the Illinois AMBER Alert notification system. It provides a quicker more robust alerting technology that enables the issuance of AMBER alerts through a variety of sources including texts, emails, faxes, and website feeds, as well as the Emergency Alert System (EAS), Integrated Public Alert Warning System (IPAWS) and Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) through cell phone towers. These are the same systems used during severe weather emergencies to provide alerts to broadcasters and individuals through their cell phones. The technology has been expanded to include all Endangered Missing Person advisories, including Silver Search.

In May 2024, Illinois observed Missing Children's Month by participating in various activities that brought attention to missing children cases in Illinois. The month-long education and safety initiative culminates in national activities in Washington, DC on May 25, Missing Child Awareness Day.

The AMBER Alert Coordinator continues to chair the Illinois AMBER Alert Task Force. The Task Force continues to monitor the national trends of child abductions and works to make sure the processes and procedures are in place to disseminate the AMBER Alert broadcast in a timely fashion. This includes evaluating all programs and procedures related to the AMBER Alert Notification System. The task force is made up of representatives from: Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois Secretary of State, Illinois Lottery, Illinois Broadcasters Association, Illinois Emergency Management Agency, Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police, Illinois Sheriff's Association, Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board, Illinois State Board of Education, Outdoor Advertisers Association, and the National Weather Service.

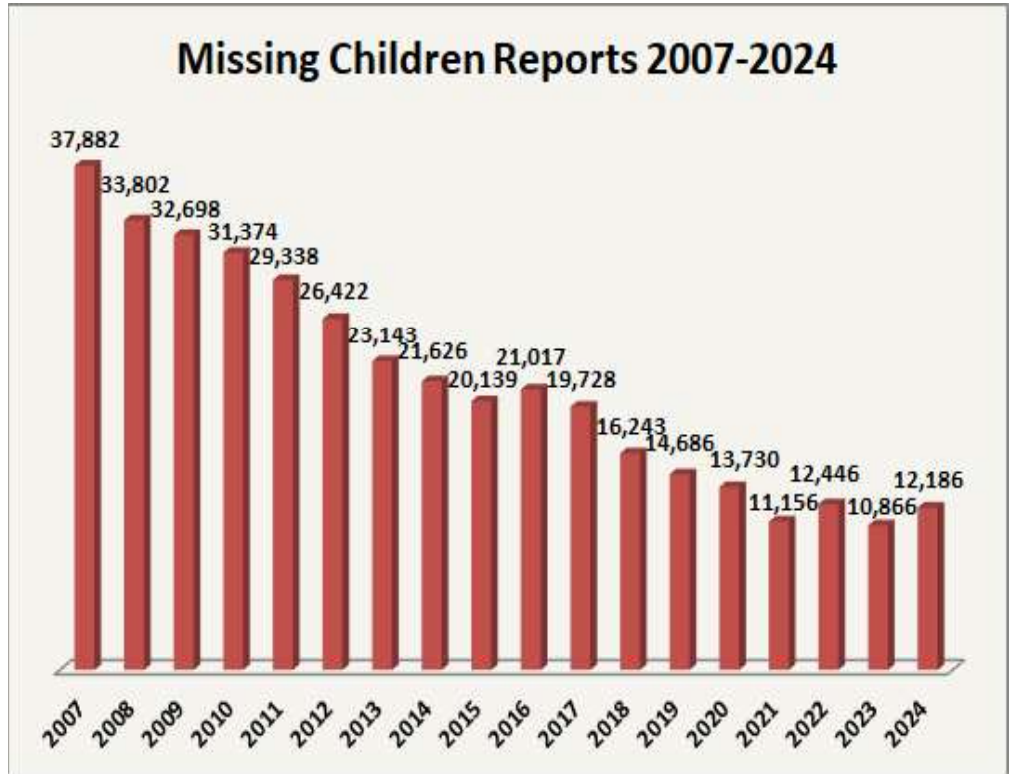
The Illinois clearinghouse continues to electronically disseminate information about missing persons to the Illinois State Board of Education for comparison with student enrollment records to identify disparities. These checks have resulted in the cancellation of numerous missing person records. The clearinghouse also provided the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and 50 state clearinghouses with bulletins on active missing person cases. The bulletins featured long-term missing children and high-risk missing person cases from Illinois.

In a partnership with the Illinois Vital Records Division, the Illinois Clearinghouse provides information on missing children so that their birth record is flagged. This is done to prevent someone who abducts a child from obtaining their birth record to enroll them in school or obtain a new identity. Each month, children who are listed as missing have requests made on their behalf to obtain a birth record. This proactive measure leads to law enforcement closing many missing person cases.

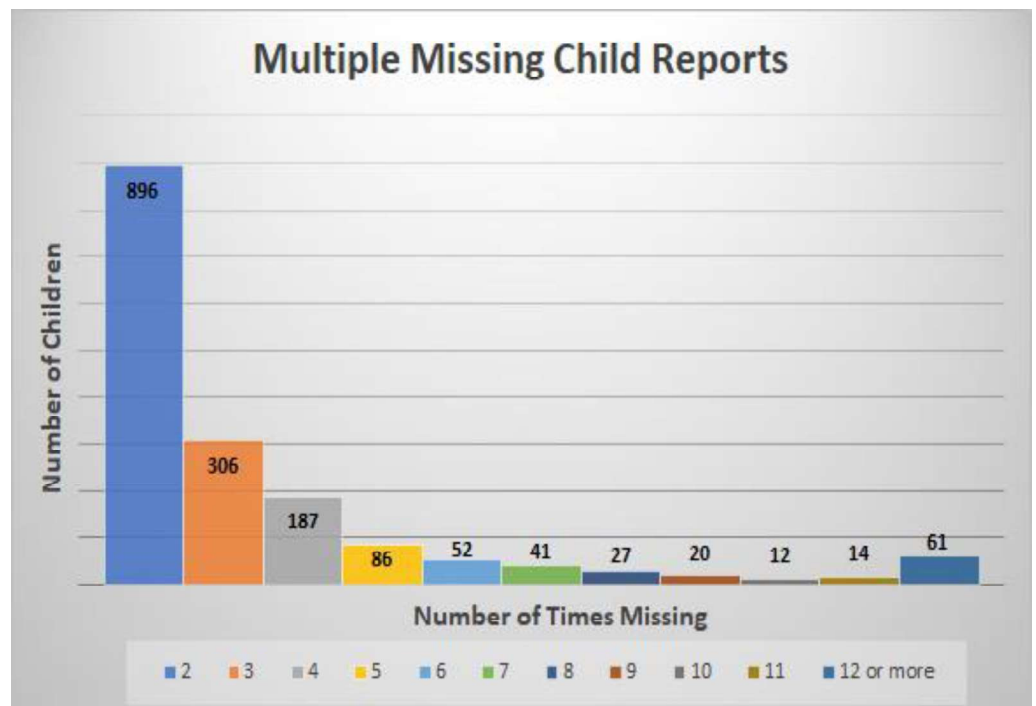
Missing Children 2024: A Statistical Overview

Missing Child Reports

There were 12,186 reports of missing persons under the age of 18 in Illinois during calendar year 2024. This represented an increase of 1,320 reports (over 10 percent) from calendar year 2023. This is only the 3rd time in 17 years that missing child reports filed have increased over the previous year. Most counties in Illinois saw missing person reports increase in 2024. The largest increases were in the counties of: Marion (331), DuPage (266), Lake (228), Cook (113), and Champaign (100).

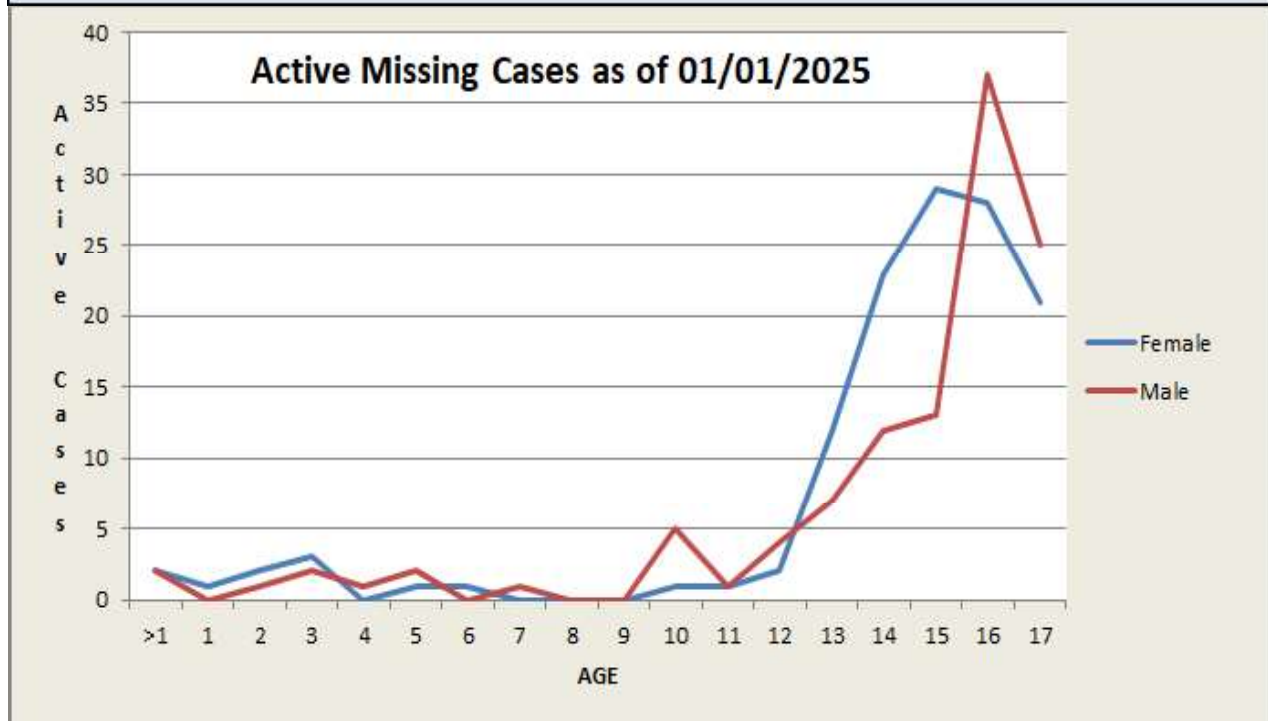


A majority of the missing child cases reported to law enforcement were children that have gone missing multiple times. Of the 12,186 missing child reports taken, 6,670 were filed for children who had gone missing multiple times (55 percent of all reports). 5,516 reports were for children missing a single time. The most reports filed for one child in 2024 was 94 different reports. The 12,186 missing child reports filed accounted for a total of 7,218 children



Male vs Female

In the last 10 years, female children have been reported missing at a higher rate than their male counterparts. 2024 was no different; female children continued to be reported missing at a higher rate. In calendar year 2024, there were 6,478 female missing child reports filed compared to 5,708 male missing reports. This indicates a nine percent increase for female reports and a 12 percent increase for male reports from 2023. In 2024, female children were reported missing at a rate of 11 percent more than male children. This is down from 2023, when the disparity was 15 percent more. Children aged 14-16 were reported missing more frequently than any other group. For the second year in a row, 14-year-old outpaced 17-year-old missing child reports for both males and females.



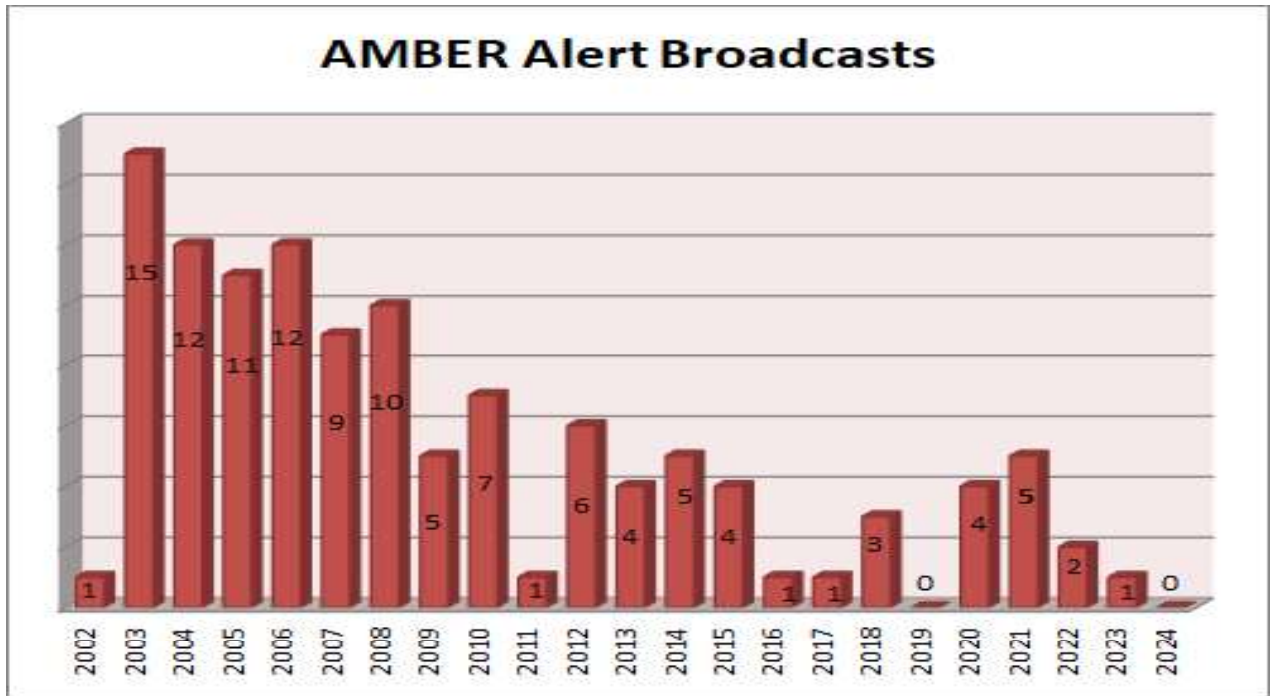
Active Missing Children Cases

Of the 12,186 reported missing children reports filed in 2024, 11,946 were cleared through arrest for non-traffic offenses; the child was recovered, located, and returned home, or the child was found deceased. This number reflected a 98 percent clearance rate for calendar year 2024. That is the highest clearance rate reported for missing child cases since the creation of this report. Clearance rates of 97 percent were recorded in 2020, 2021, and 2022. As of January 1, 2025, there were 240 missing children reports on file. The majority (79 percent) are between 14-17 years-of-age with 15-year-old females and 16-year-old males making up the largest percentage (27 percent).

Age	Female	Male	Total
>1	2	2	4
1	1	0	1
2	2	1	3
3	3	2	5
4	0	1	1
5	1	2	3
6	1	0	1
7	0	1	1
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	1	5	6
11	1	1	2
12	2	4	6
13	12	7	19
14	23	12	35
15	29	13	42
16	28	37	65
17	21	25	46
totals	127	113	240

AMBER Alerts

The AMBER Alert Notification Plan was not activated in calendar year 2024. This is only the second time since the inception of the AMBER alert program that the system was not used to broadcast an alert in a calendar year. The other year the AMBER alert program was not used was in 2019. The AMBER system was requested 26 times, with one case meeting AMBER Alert criteria, but the child was recovered prior to dissemination. Since its inception, the AMBER Alert plan has seen a steady decline from its high of 15 broadcasts in 2003.



Technology Upgrades

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA):

In 2024, the Illinois AMBER Alert system continued to utilize Wireless Emergency Alerts to notify the public, via cell phone towers, when an AMBER Alert has been issued in their area. This technology allows for anyone with an approved cell phone to receive AMBER Alert messages if they are in the same geographical area where an AMBER Alert has been issued. These cell phone alerts have been improved to allow for more characters to be included in the viewed alerts, as well as URL addresses. These upgrades allow the AMBER Alert program to push information to an approved cell phone and redirect the person to a website with the complete information regarding the AMBER Alert. AMBER Alerts can always be followed on X at @ISPAlerting

DEFINITIONS

Child - For the purposes of this report, a child is any person under the age of 18.

Missing Child - Any child whose whereabouts are unknown to the parent or legal custodian, and the disappearance is not the result of an accident, catastrophe, or arrest.

Clearance - Children who were reported missing but have been located, returned home, arrested, or found deceased.

Illinois AMBER Alert Notification Plan - A voluntary partnership between law enforcement agencies, broadcasters, and the National Weather Service to activate an urgent bulletin in the most serious child abduction cases meeting the below-listed criteria. This is the same concept used during severe weather emergencies. The goal of the AMBER Alert is to instantly galvanize the entire community to assist in the search for and safe return of the child.

AMBER Alert Criteria

- Law enforcement must confirm a child has been abducted.
- The child must be under the age of 16 or have a proven mental or physical disability.
- Police must believe the child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death; and
- There is enough descriptive information about the child, abductor, and/or suspect's vehicle to believe an immediate broadcast alert will help.

ILLINOIS STATE POLICE
CLEARINGHOUSE
FOR MISSING PERSONS

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